

LEGAL NOTICES

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LEGAL NOTICE
Public Comment Invited
Blue Jacket Fire Salvage and Reforestation Project
USDA - Forest Service
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
Palouse Ranger District

The 2017 Strychnine Fire burned approximately 1000 acres, almost entirely (920 acres) on Potlatch Corporation lands. The remaining 80 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests' Palouse Ranger District were severely burned in the fire, including economically valuable species such as Western Red Cedar, Douglas-fir, and Grand Fir. Over time, fire-killed trees lose their economic value due to deterioration of the wood from fungi, insect damage and decay. As a result, by the fall of 2018 up to 20% of the economic value of the trees could be lost.

The purpose and need of the Blue Jacket Fire Salvage and Reforestation project (Project) is to harvest dead and/or dying trees in the Strychnine Fire area on National Forest System lands. The Project's primary objective is to optimize the economic value of the timber to support the local forest products industry and the local economy. Other objectives include protecting the public from hazardous fire-killed snags, and revegetating the burned areas with appropriate tree species.

The Project is being proposed under Categorical Exclusions 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13), "Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing;" and 36 CFR 220.6(e)(5), "Regeneration of an area to native tree species, including site preparation that does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion."

Timber harvest would occur on approximately 80 acres located in Township 42 North, Range 2 West, Sections 20 and 21 (Boise Meridian). The timber harvest would be accomplished through a commercial salvage sale, with fire-killed or injured/dying trees for harvest being designated by Forest Service personnel. Desirable trees that survived the fire would be retained. Due to the topography of the project area, timber harvest would be conducted primarily by using skyline logging systems with ground-based (tractor) systems used on slopes less than 35%.

Up to 0.5 miles of temporary road would be built to provide access to the cutting unit(s). All temporary roads would be removed and rehabilitated. Access to the units would be by Forest Service Roads 4774-B and 4774.

Upon completion of the timber sale, the burned areas would be planted with a mix of appropriate native seral tree species including Western white pine, ponderosa pine, and Western larch. To improve success of reforestation efforts site preparation for planting, such as prescribed burning of slash, and post planting gopher baiting would be implemented.

Timber harvest is expected to occur in the spring and summer of 2018, with reforestation expected in the spring of 2020. Prescribed burning for site preparation would occur prior to reforestation activities. Pocket gopher baiting would occur in 2021 or 2022.

Request for Comments

Comments should be submitted as an email attachment, in Word (preferred) or PDF format, to: comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

If you choose to comment, please include the following:

- Your name, address, phone number, email address, and organization, if any;
- Title of project; and,
- Specific facts and relevant rationale you feel should be considered.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, telephone numbers, addresses, and email addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request this Agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the Agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the options available (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

Please note that this opportunity for comment is primarily for you to make statements regarding why the project should or should not proceed as described above. If you have questions about any details regarding the project, we encourage you to please contact Miles Spong, Supervisory Forester, Palouse Ranger District, 208-875-1711, to possibly get answers (including requests for more detailed project maps) before submitting your comments.

If you have any questions regarding comment submission, please contact Lois Hill, 208-935-4258 (work), 208-935-4275 (FAX); or mail inquiries to: Supervisor's Office, Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs, 903 3rd Street, Kamiah, ID, 83536.

Please submit your comments within thirty (30) days of this notice for full consideration.